LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended)   A method for presenting target content to <u>at least one target viewer selected from a plurality of</u> users in a communications network, the method comprising the steps of:

determining user characteristics ~~of a target viewer, the user characteristics~~ characterizing [[a]] <u>the at least one</u> viewer selected to view the target content;

receiving <u>the</u> user characteristics and schedule information on a target viewer's receiver device;

selecting the target content according to features available on the receiver device; and

presenting the target content in accordance with said user characteristics and said schedule information.

2. (previously presented)   The method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

monitoring a programming stream for opportunity descriptors and content descriptors;

determining a source for alternate target content; and

matching the opportunity descriptors to the target content and the user characteristics.

3. (previously presented)   The method according to claim 2, further including the step of updating a secure audit log with a viewing result.

4. (previously presented)   The method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

monitoring programming and content streams for opportunity descriptors and content descriptors;

pre-matching the opportunity descriptors to the target content and the user characteristics;

determining a source for alternate target content;

checking security rights at a function invocation on the receiver device to determine appropriateness of the target content;

if the target content is not appropriate, skipping the presenting step; and

updating pre-matched opportunity descriptors for a next function invocation of the receiver device.

5. (previously presented) The method according to claim 4, further including the step of updating a secure audit log with a viewing result.

6. (previously presented) A method according to claim 2, further including the steps of:

monitoring a content descriptor transmission stream for opportunity descriptors and content descriptors;

matching the opportunity descriptors with the receiver device's capabilities;

verifying that permission is available to access the received target content;

matching the content descriptors to the user characteristics;

selecting the content descriptors with the strongest match to the user characteristics;

if the received target content is not already in storage,

determining if the received target content can be acquired in a timely manner;

comparing the content descriptor matches of the received target content with the content descriptor matches of existing target content in the receiver's storage to determine if the existing target content has weaker matches than the received target content;

acquiring the target content from the determined alternate source; and

placing the acquired target content in storage.

7. (previously presented) The method according to claim 2, wherein a configuration is received by a micro decision engine (MDE) that includes triggers that indicate to the MDE if components need to be replaced to enable dynamic adaptation to feedback algorithms, improved functional capability, and/or component code fixes.

8. (previously presented)   The method according to claim 7, wherein the MDE receives the user characteristics from an operator.

9. (previously presented)   The method according to claim 2, wherein the user characteristics are encrypted to prevent unauthorized access.

10. (previously presented)   The method according to claim 2, wherein the user characteristics are kept in encrypted format within the facilities of a content acquisition system.

11. (previously presented)   The method according to claim 8, wherein a plurality of instances of the MDE can be generated to match one or more of capabilities and requirements of the receiver device and the capabilities of a plurality of receiver device models on the network

12. (currently amended)   A system for presenting target content to at least one target viewer selected from a plurality of users in a communications network, the system comprising:

means for determining user characteristics of a target viewer viewer, the user characteristics characterizing [[a]]the at least one viewer selected to view the target content;

means for receiving the user characteristics and schedule information on a target viewer's receiver device;

means for selecting the target content according to features available on the receiver device; and

means for presenting the target content in accordance with said user characteristics and said schedule information.

13. (previously presented)   The system according to claim 12, further comprising:

a head end component including

a content schedule component having a content schedule database, and a content scheduler for accessing the content schedule database to provide schedule triggers

a profile component having a profile database, and a profile scheduler for accessing the profile database to provide profile triggers,

a matching engine for accessing the content schedule and profile components to match content to end-users,

a delivery engine for delivering the matched content, and

a combiner that receives the delivered matched content and combines it with available content streams;

a receiver component including a data filter for filtering data and a microdecision engine for providing the guidance and commands to present content to the end-user from the data filter; and

a data network between the head end and the end-user components for transmitting data.

14. (original)   The system according to claim 13, wherein the delivery engine is provided in a plurality of instances to provide for load balancing and capacity requirements.

15. (currently amended)   A storage medium readable by a computer, the medium encoding a computer process to provide a method for target content presentation to at least one target viewer selected from a plurality of users in a communications network, the computer process comprising the steps of:

determining user characteristics of a viewer, the user characteristics characterizing [[a]] the at least one viewer selected to view the target content;

receiving the user characteristics and schedule information on a target viewer's receiver device;

selecting the target content according to features available on the receiver device; and

presenting the target content in accordance with said user characteristics and said schedule information.